

## ...Daron Allen

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now! So, we've learned from many people the best ways to sell a membership using our collective experience to provide this expertise from many pros. This has allowed us to provide an automated technology solution that encompasses the best sales and other practices in the industry.

**C.I.** - Let's talk about what I call the "New Year's Resolutionists." My question is, how does Visual Fitness Planner impact the new members, the New Year's Resolutionists, a new joiner in his first month in the club in the ways we know are important to bond them to the club and get them started the way they should get started to get results?

**DA** - Norm, that's a great question, and to be honest with you, I think our system does this better than any in the industry. Visual impact. I believe our biggest strength is creating a customized visual impact for clubs. This Visual Impact is the key to enhanced revenue and retention through membership sales, personal training and for fee program participation. This leads to effective, consistent and branded sales presentations. Since a picture is worth a thousand words, we help clubs use those pictures to create revenue. That's because our system has the visual ability to educate and motivate the new member on what it actually takes to succeed and achieve results in the club. Our system actually educates them to understand what the next 60 to 90 days should look like in terms of the lifecycle of their membership in achieving results. On top of that, we have the ability to give them a glimpse of what those results will look like. So, they can actually be motivated to really strive to accomplish their goal

because our system has educated them on what it will take and motivated them to look into their future. Then, they can say, 'WOW... I see what I can do.'

What we do Norm is we help the new member or existing member who still is unfit to get a glimpse of what they can actually accomplish. We help make fitness tangible for the brand new club member. I've been saying for a long time that our industry is selling the intangible. But, our system gives them the ability to reduce their risk of failure and can actually change their life right at the beginning stage of their membership or their return and renewal of previous club activity after an absence from working out for a while. If we compare a Visual Fitness Planner member versus a non-Visual Fitness Planner member, first, we provide better value for the member in the club because of this education early on. Secondly, we know from feedback from our clubs that typically they experience a 20 to 30% increase in their "for-fee" services they sell. This means more personal training, cycling classes, weight-loss systems... anything that is going to provide more hands-on support to a member. Our clubs report a 20 to 30% increase, so if a new member is educated more thoroughly, has a greater motivation and also tends to purchase additional services to help hit their goals, there is no question they will remain members longer, and are much, much more likely to succeed. Plus, Visual Fitness Planner keeps prospects "in a constant loop" of regular follow up. We call this our "Automatic Feedback Loops. Success in Membership Sales is all about the basics and the ability to give a fantastic presentation time and time again. Clubs that excel at prospecting, getting referrals, providing solutions for motivational hot buttons,

effectively eliminating objections and procrastination and creating value away from price are the clubs that excel. The technology we have created gives owners, General Managers, Sales Manager and Personal Training directors instantaneous feedback loops.

**C.I.** - And, on top of that, I'd bet you could add that they are much more likely to refer their friends to become members of the VFP Club.  
**DA** - There's no doubt that they do!

**C.I.** - Now in your 10th year, and in 600 clubs, how have you seen your product advance make Visual Fitness Planner more of a necessity for clubs?

**DA** - We have changed and built VFP so that it is branded specifically to the club we are working with. Not only is it branded, but it is customized to their specific system or method of selling. Therefore, VFP is the most consistent and effective system for selling. But, the key here Norm, is VFP is not just for selling, it has become the training platform for all of their new employees!

**C.I.** - We all know how differentiation of one's club in their market is a key to both new membership sales and retention. How does VFP truly differentiate one's club in their market?

**DA** - Our system, and this is key, differentiates the *EXPERIENCE* of the prospect and the brand new member. In order to win in today's environment, I believe that *differentiating the experience may be the number one metric of success for a club*. There are so many things that tie to the experience. Obviously, sales, referrals and ancillary purchases... are all tied to that experience. Our system engages the prospect and the new member at an EMOTIONAL LEVEL that gets them to focus on their health, their body and what is really important to them. Too many times during the sales experience and life, people don't focus on themselves enough. Our system provides the experience that differentiates the club for the consumer.

**C.I.** - The person truly feels cared for, dealt with... and serviced.

**DA** - Norm, I'd follow that up with another thing. You've gone through our VFP system, so you know about it. But, we hear statistics about how important



*The Visual Fitness Planner Team  
 (L to R) Warren Webb, Daron Allen and Sam Lanasa*

exercise is and how the lack of exercise is related to various diseases and disease risk. Our system makes all of that data and all of those studies, relevant to the prospect, available to them, personally and specifically, with the click of a button. It makes it relevant and touches them on an emotional level personally within the natural flow of the presentation.

**C.I.** - Who are some of your leading edge independent club clients and club chain clients?

**DA** - This is a hard one to answer because all of our clients are great club operators. But, let me single out three from 140 of our independents: Joe Cirulli of The Gainesville Health and Fitness Center in Gainesville, Florida; Mike Minton of Minton's Sportsplex, Texarkana, Texas; and Phil Howard and Larry Lawrence of Fitness Connection in Houston, Texas, are some of our longest term and most successful VFP clubs as great examples, but we have many more.

On the club chain side, we have Lifestyle Family Fitness, Club One Fitness, XSport Fitness, Merritt Athletic Clubs, GoodLife Fitness, Urban Active, Gold's Gym LA (Willy and Angel Banos) and Brick Bodies.

**C.I.** - Your VFP Ad (Opposite Page) makes some amazing statements, and it says one of your client clubs has gone from zero Program/Personal Trainer sales revenue to \$12,000 to \$15,000 a day! That's an amazing number!  
**DA** - We actually have the ability to automate personal training systems, whether it's at the point of sale or as part of their new

member integration process or appointment. Some of our clients literally were not selling any personal training at the point of sale. We have been able to help them, with our system, literally change the cash flow position of their company by helping them sell significant amounts of personal training at the point of sale.

Of course, there are many more greats among our 600 Visual Fitness Planner Clubs. But, I want to add one more thing if I may. That is, it seems our company has outgrown its name. We impact so many things, you know; membership sales, the entire new member integration, prospecting presentations and we also have the ability to build websites. We do these automated price presentations, and we are now integrating with the billing and management companies. We are also going to be launching a new website within the next 30 to 45 days, and we will have an announcement of the date for launch and the new website address. You'll be the first to know, Norm, so you get the scoop first.

*(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 35-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates was the Founder and is now in his 16th year as the Publisher of CLUB INSIDER. He was IHRSA's 1st President, and a Co-founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In March, 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of IHRSA's highest honors. Cates may be reached by phone at: 770-850-8506 or email at: Norm@clubinsideronline.com)*

